

The Tragedy of Hamlet

And fall a cursing like a very drabbe, stallion, fie upon't, foh.
About my braines, hum, I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a Play
Have by the very cunning of the Scene
Beene strooke so to the soule, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions:
For murther though it have no tongue will speake
With most miraculous organ. Ile have these Players
Play something like the murther of my father
Before mine uncle: Ile observe his lookes,
Ile tent him to the quicke, if a doe blench
I know my course. The spirit that I have scene
May be a divell, and the divell hath power
T'assume a pleasing shape, yea and perhaps
Out of my weaknesse and my melancholly,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damne me: Ile have grounds
More relative than this, the Play's the thing
Wherein Ile catch the conscience of the King. *Exit.*

Enter King, Queene, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencraus, Gyl-
densterne, Lords.

King. And can you by no drift of conference
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his daies of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacie?

Ros. He does confesse he feesles himselfe distracted,
But from what cause he will by no meanes speake.

Gyl. Nor doe we find him forward to be sounded,
But with a crafty madnesse keepes aloofe
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true estate.

Quee. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a Gentleman.

Gyl. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Quee. Did you assay him to any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certaine Players

Prince of Denmarke.

We ore-raught on the way, of these we told him,
And there did seeme in him a kind of joy
To heare of it; they are here about the Court,
And as I thinke they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true,
And he beseecht me to entreat your Majesties
To heare and see the matter.

King. With all my heart,
And it doth much content me,
To heare him so inclin'd:
Good Gentlemen give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose into these delights.

Ros. We shall my Lord. *Exeunt Ros. & Gyl.*

King. Sweet Gertrard leave us two,
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he as 'twere by accident may here
Affront Ophelia; her father and my selfe,
Wee'll so bestow our selves, that seeing unscene
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him as he is behav'd,
If't be th'affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Quee. I shall obey you:
And for my part Ophelia I doe wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlets wildnesse, so shall I hope your vertues
Will bring him to his wonted way againe,
To both your honours.

Ophel. Madam, I wish it may.

Pol. Ophelia walk you here: gracious so please you
We will bestow our selves; read on this Booke,
That shew of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness: we are oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotions visage,
And pious action we doe sugar o're
The divell himselfe.

King. O 'tis too true: